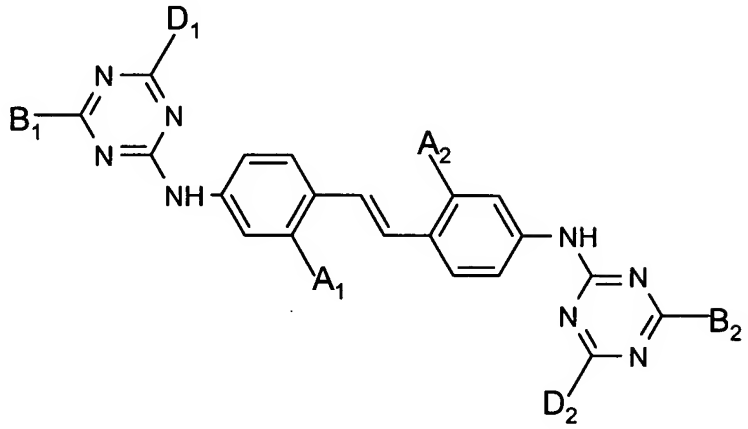
IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly replace the prior claims listing by the following listing.

1. (currently amended): A compound of the formula



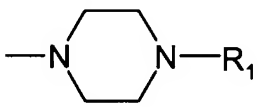
(1),

wherein

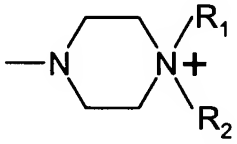
A_1 and A_2 each, independently of one another, represent $-SO_3^-$ or $-SO_3M$, where

M represents hydrogen, an alkaline or alkaline earth metal, ammonium or alkylammonium,

B_1 and B_2 each, independently of one another, represent the moiety



(2) or



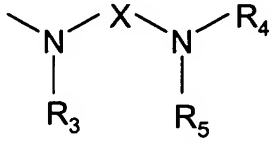
(3),

in which

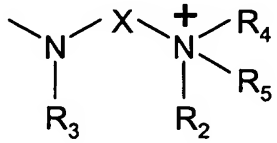
R_1 represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C_1-C_{12}alkyl or branched C_3-C_{12}alkyl group, which C_2-C_{12}alkyl or C_3-C_{12}alkyl group, respectively, may be interrupted by one or two heteroatoms and is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC_1-C_4alkyl, $-NH_2$, -NHC_1-C_4alkyl, -N(C_1-C_4alkyl)$_2$, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or $-N^+(C_1\text{-}C_4\text{alkyl})_3$ groups and

R_2 represents C_1-C_4alkyl, C_2-C_4hydroxyalkyl, $-CH_2CONH_2$, $-CH_2COOH$ or $-CH_2COO$ C_1-C_4alkyl or, alternatively,

B_1 and B_2 each, independently of one another, represent a group of the formula



(4) or



(5),

in which

R_3, R_4 and R_5 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl,

C_2-C_4hydroxyalkyl, the group -X'-NR_6R_7 or the group -X'-$N^+R_3R_6R_7$, whereby at least one of the substituents R_4 and/or R_5 represents -X'-NR_6R_7 or -X'-$N^+R_3R_6R_7$,
X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a straight-chain C_2-C_8alkylene or branched C_3-C_8alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH or -C(=O)- groups,
R_6 and R_7 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring and
R_2 is as previously defined and each
D_1 and D_2, independently of one another, are either defined as for B_1 and B_2 or represent halogen,[[$-NH_2$,]] C_1-C_4monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by C_1-C_4alkoxy, amino, mono- or di-C_1-C_4alkylamino or tri-C_1-C_4alkylammonium; C_2-C_4hydroxy-alkylamino, C_2-C_4di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline monosulphonic acid or sulphonamide residue or a 5- or 6-membered, saturated heterocyclic ring or, alternatively, mixtures of compounds of formula (1).

2. (original): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 1, in which the residues A_1 and A_2 are identical, B_1 and B_2 are identical and D_1 and D_2 are identical.

3. (previously presented): A three-component mixture of compounds of formula (1), according to claim 1, comprising two components in which the residues A_1 and A_2 are identical, B_1 and B_2 are identical and D_1 and D_2 are identical, and a third component in which the residues A_1 and A_2 are identical, but either, B_1 and B_2 are different or D_1 and D_2 are different.

4. (previously presented): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 1, in which the moieties B_1 and/or B_2 are represented by the formulae (2) and/or (3) and in which
R_1 represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C_1-C_4alkyl or branched C_3-C_4alkyl group which may be interrupted by one or two heteroatoms and is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC_1-C_4alkyl, $-NH_2$, -NHC_1-C_4alkyl, -N(C_1-C_4alkyl)$_2$, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or -N^+(C_1-C_4alkyl)$_3$ groups,
A_1 and A_2 are both $-SO_3^-$ or $-SO_3M$,
M, R_2, D_1 and D_2 being as defined according to claim 1.

5. (currently amended): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 4, in which the moieties B_1 and B_2 are identical and represented by the formulae (2) or (3), whereby

R_1 represents hydrogen, a straight-chain C_1-C_4alkyl or branched C_3-C_4alkyl group which may be unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH, -OC_1-C_4alkyl, -NH_2, -NHC_1-C_4alkyl, -N(C_1-C_4alkyl)$_2$, -N-pyrrolidino, -N-piperidino, -N-morpholino or -N^+(C_1-C_4alkyl)$_3$ groups,

R_2 represents C_1-C_4alkyl,

A_1 and A_2 are both -SO_3^- or -SO_3M, whereby

M represents hydrogen, potassium or sodium and

D_1 and D_2 are identical and may be represented by halogen, ~~especially chlorine, -NH_2,~~ C_1-C_4monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by mono- or di-C_1-C_4alkylamino or tri-C_1-C_4alkylammonium; C_2-C_4hydroxyalkylamino, C_2-C_4-di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline sulphonamide or sulphonic acid residue or a morpholino-, piperidino- or -N-C_1-C_4substituted piperazino ring.

6. (previously presented): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 1, in which the moieties B_1 and/or B_2 are represented by the formulae (4) and/or (5), whereby

R_4 represents the group -X'-NR_6R_7 or the group -X'-$N^+R_3R_6R_7$,

X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a straight-chain C_2-C_8alkylene or branched C_3-C_8alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two -OH or -C(=O)- groups,

R_3 and R_5 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or C_2-C_4hydroxyalkyl,

R_6 and R_7 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring,

A_1 and A_2 are both -SO_3^- or -SO_3M,

M, R_2, D_1 and D_2 being as defined according to claim 1.

7. (previously presented): A compound of formula (1), according to claim 6, in which the moieties B_1 and B_2 are identical and represented by the formulae (4) or (5) whereby

R_4 represents the group -X'-NR_6R_7 or the group -X'-$N^+R_3R_6R_7$,

X and X' each, independently of each other, represent a C_2-C_4alkylene chain, which is unsubstituted or substituted by -OH,

R_3 and R_5 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen or C_1-C_4alkyl,

R_6 and R_7 each, independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring,

R_2 represents C_1-C_4alkyl,

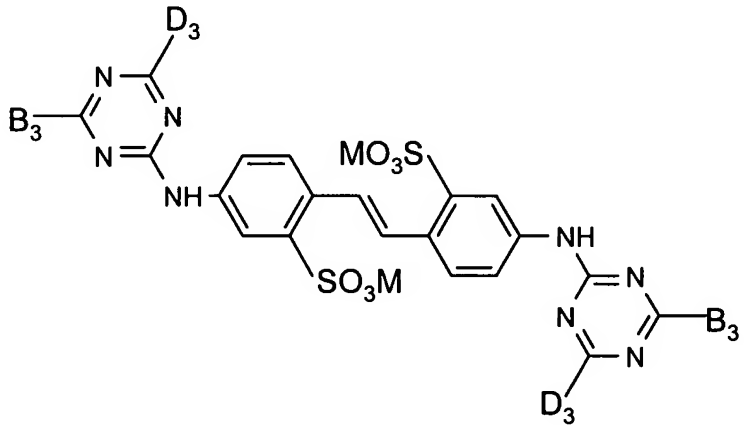
A_1 and A_2 are both -SO_3^- or -SO_3M, whereby

M represents hydrogen, potassium or sodium and

D_1 and D_2 are identical and may be represented by halogen, C_1-C_4monoalkyl- or dialkylamino, said alkyl groups being unsubstituted or substituted by mono- or di-C_1-C_4alkylamino or tri-C_1-C_4alkyl-ammonium; C_2-C_4hydroxyalkylamino, C_2-C_4-di(hydroxyalkyl)amino, anilino, an aniline sulphonamide residue or a morpholino-, piperidino- or -N-C_1-C_4alkylsubstituted piperazino ring.

8. (previously presented): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (1) as defined in claim 1, or for mixtures of said compounds comprising two components in which the residues A_1 and A_2 are identical, B_1 and B_2 are identical and D_1 and D_2 are identical, and a third component in which the residues A_1 and A_2 are identical, but either, B_1 and B_2 are different or D_1 and D_2 are different, by reacting, under known reaction conditions, cyanuric chloride, successively, in any desired sequence, with each of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid, an amino compound capable of introducing groups B_1 and/or B_2 or precursors or mixtures thereof and an amino compound capable of introducing groups D_1 and/or D_2 or precursors or mixtures thereof, B_1, B_2, D_1 and D_2 being as defined in claim 1.

9. (previously presented): A compound of the formula



(6),

wherein

B_3 represents a group of the formula -NH$(CH_2)_n$NR_8R_9, n being 2, 3 or 4 and

D_3 represents halogen, an anilino, anilino-sulphonic acid or anilino-sulphonamide residue,

R_8 and R_9 each independently of each other, represent hydrogen, C_1-C_4alkyl, C_2-C_4-hydroxyalkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, complete a pyrrolidino, piperidino or morpholino ring and M is as defined in claim 1, with the proviso that those compounds in which D_3 is anilino, B_3 is an N-(3-aminopropyl)-diethanolamino, N,N-dimethyl-1,3-propanediamino or 4-(3-aminopropyl)morpholine residue or in which D_3 represents a sulphanilamide residue, B_3 is a 4-(3'-aminopropyl)morpholine residue and M is hydrogen are excluded.

10. (previously presented): A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (6) as defined in claim 9 by reacting, under known reaction conditions, cyanuric chloride, successively, in any desired sequence, with each of 4,4'-diaminostilbene-2,2'-disulphonic acid, an amino compound capable of introducing groups B_3 and an amino compound capable of introducing groups D_3, B_3 and D_3 being as defined in claim 9.

11-14 (canceled).

15. (previously presented): A method for optical brightening of paper in pulp, size-press, metering press or coating applications, which comprises contacting said materials with an aqueous composition comprising a compound of formula (1) as defined in claim 1 or a mixture thereof.

16. (previously presented): A method for optical brightening of paper in pulp, size-press, metering press or coating applications, which comprises contacting said materials with an aqueous composition comprising a mixture of compounds of formula (1) as defined in claim 3.